GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
ABSTRACT

Development of Ancient & Historic Temples – Regulation on Construction and Development Activities– Orders – Issued.

REVENUE (ENDTS.II) DEPARTMENT

G.O.MS.No. 222 Dated:24.06.2015.

Read

O R D E R:

India is the oldest living civilization in the world. Indian culture and traditions are closely linked to Sanatana Dharma whose edifice is the plethora of temples across the nook and corner of India.

A large number of temples in Andhra Pradesh are more than 100 years old. Hence, strictly speaking, they have to be governed by guidelines meant to protect ancient monuments. However, temples being religious structures are not strictly governed by statutes as is the case with forts and palaces. Presently, a large number of temples are being renovated in the state, either with private contributions or with the funds provided by the Endowments Department. While undertaking such renovations, presently no effort is being made to preserve the heritage value of these temples. Mostly, new temples are coming up in the place of old structures. In almost all cases, it is lack of understanding on the part of endowment officials, temple trustees and devotees, which is the main problem.

Keeping this in view, the Endowment Department has undertaken an exercise to preserve heritage temples. Hence, the following instructions are issued:

I. NO DESTRUCTION OF ANCIENT TEMPLES:

In many villages, there are ancient temples which are several hundred years old. Though they are local temples catering to the local population, in terms of their history and architectural heritage they are significant. Several instances have come to the notice of the Government that such ancient temples even though small in size are being completely removed on the grounds that they have become dilapidated. Hereafter, there will be a complete ban on demolition of such ancient temples anywhere in the State. All steps will be made only to undertake careful restoration based on sound principles established by Archeological Survey of India. If any temple is destroyed without appropriate approval of A.P. Dharmik Parishad or the Government such actions will be treated as criminal offence and action will be taken accordingly. For example recently, an ancient temple in Karamchedu village of Prakasam district was completely removed without the notice of the Government and a new temple has been built in its place. **While constructing a new temple is laudable it should not come up in place of an ancient temple under any circumstances.**

II. NO CONSTRUCTION OF NEW SUB-TEMPLES IN THE PREMISES OF ANCIENT TEMPLES:

A complete ban is hereby imposed on construction of all upa-alayams (sub temples) within the premises of ancient temples. Appropriate permission of the A.P.Dharmika Parishad or the Government should be taken before undertaking construction of any upa -alayams. Also no upa-alayams can be even proposed for any saints or sadhus within the ancient temples as it is not permitted under the Agama Sastra.

III. NO NEW CONSTRUCTION WITHIN TEMPLE PREMISES:

a) No new structures shall be constructed within the precincts of the ancient temples (which are 100 years or more old).
b) All ancient temples should remain true to the original plan and designs.

IV. NO USE OF MODERN MATERIALS IN ANCIENT TEMPLES:

a) In many temples donors are coming forward to supply free tiles, polished granite, marble stone and such other construction materials. Merely, because some donors supply material free it need not be accepted by the temple authorities. Hereafter such modern construction materials shall not be used for plastering of walls or for flooring of any part of ancient temples.

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b) Wherever marble or ceramic tiles or polished granite stone has been used they shall be removed exposing the original stone which should be neatly dressed and left in a pristine condition.

c) Painting of stone walls shall be completely avoided hereafter. Enamel paints which emit toxins and appear garish are being used to paint stone walls and pillars of ancient temples. If already painted it shall be removed and chemical treatment/sand plasting should be done to restore the original quality of the stone pillars and stone walls in all ancient temples.

d) Any ancient wall inscriptions/frescoes should not be damaged.

V. NO ADHOC USAGE OF OPEN SPACES:

a) The prakara mandapams and mukha mandapams shall not be enclosed and made into rooms for any purpose.

VI. ACKNOWKEDGMENT OF DONATIONS AND RENOVATIONS:

a) Donors who are giving donations of equipment like fans, water coolers etc. are prominently painting those equipments indicating the donation. This practice should be given up. Donor contribution should be entered in the official register and suitably acknowledged. The details of donations made should be posed in the temple website.

b) There is a practice of putting granite plaques on the walls of ancient temples. This leads to damaging the walls. Henceforth installation of such stone plaques is banned. Instead a small steel plaque can be affixed to the wall.

VII. NO CONSTRUCTION IN THE VICINITY OF ANCIENT TEMPLES

(a) Some of the temples are growing fast and attracting more devotees. Hence, it has become important to avoid congestion around such temples. Hence, no fresh construction shall be made by the temple authorities in the immediate vicinity of such temples.

(b) In ancient / historic times all temple related activities were conducted within the temple precincts itself. In view of the huge influx of pilgrims, it is necessary to shift activities like administrative offices, Annadanam hall, ticket counters, Book shops, queue lines etc. which are not part of religious activity to outside the temple. This will allow the temple to be used for religious purposes only.

(c) A master plan shall be prepared for each such temple.

(d) EOs shall not allow construction of huge buildings very close to major / ancient temples even by private parties (atleast upto a distance of 100 meters). They should take up the matter with local authorities whenever such developments take place.

(e) No shops or any other structures shall be constructed abutting prakarams of ancient temples.

VIII. Wherever structures are in a weak condition, the Executive Officers shall immediately bring it to the notice of the Commissioner, Endowments, in writing and seek careful restoration.

(BY ORDER AND IN THE NAME OF THE GOVERNOR OF ANDHRA PRADESH)

J.S.V. PRASAD
PRINCIPAL SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT

To
The Commissioner, Endowments.

All Executive Officers Devasthanams. }
S.E./E.Es. of Endowments Department } through Commissioner,
All A.Cs, J.Cs, D.Cs of Endowments } Endowments
Department . }

// FORWARDED :: BY ORDER //

SECTION OFFICER